

Drafting an accessibility statement for your website

About this guidance

The British International Studies Association (BISA) were awarded funding, as part of our EDI Small Grants Programme, to help improve their website accessibility for all users. Here, BISA use their learning from this process to provide guidance for other social science societies who may be interested in drafting or updating an accessibility statement for their own websites.

This guidance has been written by Maria Young (Agile Collective) and Chrissie Duxson (BISA Communications Manager).

Introduction

An accessibility statement outlines the measures taken to ensure that users with disabilities can access and interact with a website's content effectively.

Creating an accessibility statement for your website is an important step in demonstrating commitment to inclusivity and transparency. Whether or not your website(s) are legally required to meet specific accessibility regulations, it's considered best practice to follow recognised standards like the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).

Your accessibility statement should begin with a clear statement of the organisation's commitment to digital accessibility and reference any standards followed, for example WCAG 2.2 Level AA. Additionally, it should note whether a formal accessibility audit or testing has been conducted, and summarise the results if applicable.

The statement should also be practical and user-focused. It's helpful to include information on known accessibility limitations, if any, along with alternative options for accessing the same content. Crucially, the statement should provide clear contact details for users to report accessibility barriers or request content in alternative formats. This can help foster an inclusive environment and provide a feedback loop to continuously improve accessibility. Even in the absence of legal obligations, a well-prepared accessibility statement demonstrates respect for all users and a proactive approach to responsible web design.

Before you begin

Before writing an accessibility statement, there are a few key steps you should complete to ensure the statement is accurate, credible, and useful to your users:

- 1. Assess your website's accessibility**

Begin with an evaluation of your website against recognised accessibility standards, such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2. This can be done through a mix of automated tools (e.g. Axe, WAVE, Lighthouse) and manual testing

(e.g. keyboard-only navigation, screen reader use). The goal is to identify any barriers that might affect users with disabilities.

2. **Identify and document issues**

Once testing is complete, document any known accessibility issues. This should include the nature of the issue, which users it might affect, and how severely it impacts usability. This transparency will inform the 'limitations' section of your statement and help prioritise fixes.

3. **Establish a remediation plan**

Outline how and when identified issues will be addressed. Even if full compliance isn't immediately possible, showing that you're actively working toward it builds trust and accountability.

4. **Set up a feedback mechanism**

Before publishing the statement, ensure there's a reliable and monitored way for users to report accessibility problems. This could be an email address, a web form, or a phone contact.

Once these steps are completed, you'll have the foundation necessary to draft a clear, honest, and actionable accessibility statement.

Sample accessibility statement

You don't necessarily need to start from scratch to write your accessibility statement. The gov.uk website provides a template that you can customise for your organisation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sample-accessibility-statement/sample-accessibility-statement-for-a-fictional-public-sector-website>.

The template is designed for a fictional public sector website, and public sector websites are required by law to publish an accessibility statement. If you are not a public sector organisation you can currently remove the 'Enforcement procedure' section.

Further information

BISA's web accessibility improvement project was funded by the Academy of Social Sciences and ESRC EDI Funding Scheme. We engaged [Maria Young](#) from Agile Collective to lead. The project included auditing the BISA websites against WCAG 2.2 AA criteria, user testing, remedial work and the drafting of an accessibility statement outlining the remaining limitations and issues against the AA standard.